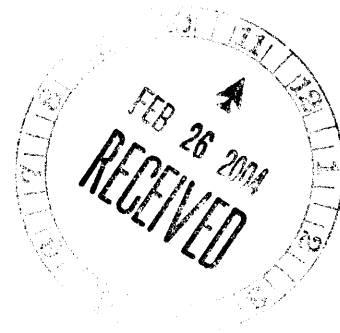


#E1-668
R21

February 22, 2004

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001



Attention: Rini Ghosh

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal scoping process.

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to both projects, including no quarry and no rail line at all.

My name is Thomas W. Walpole, I am retired and 66 years old. I purchased my Quihi land in May 1995. My small cattle ranch is located 3 miles south of the quarry site and ½ mile west of the proposed RR, FM 2676 borders me to the south and CR 351 borders my west property line. The Elm Creek runs North to South through my property. I have one shallow well, 40 feet deep and one Edwards Aquifer well 935 feet deep.

I am deeply concerned in the following issues and how they affect my home, my family and my property. I request that the EIS include my list of concerns

- Define the eminent domain law as it applies to this project
- The property value will decrease on properties in the vicinity of the quarry and RR.
- The large amount of Edwards Aquifer water that will be used to support the quarry operation This is competition for water resources that are needed by our farms and cities Using scarce water resources for yet another quarry versus using water for farm irrigation and public drinking water.
- As has happened in other places, wells and septic tanks have been damaged by blasting in quarries. Septic tanks have actually polluted wells when blasting has damaged their structures.

- We need a full flood analysis on all proposed and alternates routes of the RR and the quarry site as well.
- Include a study of the effects of the heavy loaded trucks weighing 78,000 pounds traveling on 2676 and other affected county roads, which were not built to withstand that weight. Who will pay for upgrading of state and county roads that the trucks travel on?
- Fuel storage at the quarry area south of CR 353. This proposed fuel storage area is over the Edwards Recharge Zone. Diesel fuel storage is prohibited over the Aquifer, according to EAA rules. If not here, then where will fuel and other hazmat be stored?
- A full study of the effects each proposed route would have on the aesthetics of the historic district and the archeological artifacts of Quihi.
- Study the effects that blasting in the quarry would have to the Medina Dam.
- A study on the times and duration of rail traffic across any and all roads without grade separation.
- A study on the control of weeds and vegetation along the railroad tracks, the effects of pesticides used and the effect upon wetlands. The prevention and control of flash fires during times of dry vegetation.
- A study of what will happen to the Edwards Aquifer water quality when Vulcan mines to 200-250 feet.
- A study of what will happen to the land after it has been mined.
- How many trains does SGR have on the proposed line? Will any rail cars be parked or pre-positioned anywhere along the line, will there be any hazmat stored anywhere along the line?
- To help reduce the RR noise pollution, require SGR to use the newly developed "Quiet Tracks." They eliminate the familiar clackety, clack sound when train wheels go over track joints.

Sincerely,



Thomas W. Walpole
5201 FM 2676
Hondo, TX. 78861

cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Texas Senator Frank Malda
Medina County Judge Jim Barden
Medina County Commissioner Royce Hartman